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RATIONALIZATION OF THE WORK AND REFORM OF THE AGENDA OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

Report of the First Committee (Part II)

Rapporteur: Mr. Macaire KABORE (Burkina Faso)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The previous recommendation made by the First Committee to the General Assembly under item 156 appears in the report of the Committee contained in document A/48/688.

2. At its 31st meeting, on 19 November 1993, the First Committee concluded the consideration of agenda item 156 at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

3. At its 94th plenary meeting, on 2 June 1994, the General Assembly decided to reopen consideration of agenda item 156 and to allocate it again to the First Committee.

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.1/48/L.58

4. On 10 June 1994, the Chairman of the First Committee submitted a draft resolution entitled "Organization of the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee)" (A.C.1/48/L.50). The draft resolution, which was not pressed to a vote, read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 47/54 G of 8 April 1993,

"Pursuant to its resolution 48/87 of 16 December 1993, particularly paragraph 3 thereof,

"Recalling the ongoing efforts of the General Assembly aimed at revitalizing its work, and noting in this respect its resolution 47/233 of 17 August 1993,

"Mindful that the United Nations has a central role and responsibility in the sphere of disarmament and international security,

"Desiring to enhance the effectiveness of its First Committee to fulfil the role envisaged for it,

"Stressing the need to organize the work of the First Committee in the most rational and effective way possible,

"Recognizing the need to allow more time during the annual sessions of the First Committee to conduct intensive and focused consultations on the items under consideration in the First Committee,

"Taking into account existing resource constraints of the United Nations,

"1. Decides to enhance the effectiveness of the First Committee by adopting for its forty-ninth session a programme of work that takes into account the thematic approach set out in paragraph 2 of resolution 48/87 of 16 December 1993;

"2. Decides that the number of meetings during the regular session of the First Committee shall be recommended by the members of the incoming Bureau of the First Committee after consultations with delegations and the Secretariat, taking into account:

"(a) The needs in terms of time and services for the First Committee to fulfil its duties;

"(b) The number of meetings normally allocated to it at previous sessions;

"(c) The degree to which the First Committee at previous sessions was able to fulfil its duties in the allocated meeting time;

"(d) The degree to which the First Committee at previous sessions made full use of the allocated meeting time;

"(e) Available means and resources;

"3. Decides to adopt for the proceedings of the First Committee a three-phased approach, the consecutive elements of which are characterized as follows:

"(a) General debate (first phase):

"(i) The time for the delivery of a single statement should not exceed seven minutes per delegation;

"(ii) Statements on behalf of more than one delegation should not exceed twelve minutes;

"(iii) More extensive and detailed contributions to the general debate may be tabled in written form and will be considered as if they were read out orally. They will be reflected in the records of the First Committee without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;

"(iv) The floor will be given to the speakers on the basis of a consecutive list of speakers to the extent possible and in order to complete the general debate at the earliest possible stage;

"(b) Discussion of specific items under consideration in the First Committee (second phase):

"(i) The meetings shall be held in an informal mode but with appropriate conference services;

"(ii) The discussion shall be structured according to broad topic areas in line with paragraph 2 of resolution 48/87, taking into consideration the fact that meetings for discussion of different topics should not overlap;

"(iii) Based on consultations and the outcome of the previous session of the First Committee, the Chairman of the First Committee, in cooperation with its Bureau and the Secretariat, shall submit an indicative list of key questions to be addressed within each of the major topic areas;

"(c) Consideration of and action on draft resolutions (third phase):

"(i) The deadline for the submission of draft resolutions shall be only after the end of the second phase;

"(ii) The consideration of all draft resolutions shall follow the same clustering in broad topic areas as was adopted for the second phase;

"4. Decides, as regards procedural treatment, not to make in future any distinction between disarmament and international security items;

"5. Recommends, in implementing the three-phase approach outlined in paragraph 3 above, to consider the adoption, for the forty-ninth session of the First Committee, of a programme of work and timetable along the lines of the illustrative example provided in the annex to the present resolution;

"6. Requests the incoming Chairman of the First Committee to continue consultations on the further rationalization of the work and the effective functioning of the Committee;

"7. Urges the Secretary-General to provide, taking due account of existing resource constraints, the appropriate means and resources to permit the implementation of the work programme for the forty-ninth session of the First Committee;

"8. Decides to review the question of further rationalization and improvement of the work of the First Committee at its forty-ninth session.

"ANNEX

"Illustrative example of a programme of work and timetable

"First phase

First week	
Monday-Thursday (approx. 5 meetings a/)	General debate
Monday 6 p.m.	Closure of the list of speakers for the general debate

"Second phase b/

Friday Second week Monday-Friday Third week Monday	Discussion of specific items in informal consultations (with appropriate conference services)

"a/ This figure may need adjustment after the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate.

"b/ The overall number of meetings for the regular session of the Committee will be determined as described in para. 2 of resolution _____. This number includes:

One meeting for organizational questions

One meeting for the observance of Disarmament Week and the Pledging Conference for the Disarmament Information Programme

Approximately five meetings for the general debate

Approximately two meetings for rationalization and reform.

The remainder of the meeting time available shall be divided up between the second and the third phases so that approximately two fifths shall be allocated to the second and three fifths to the third phase.

Wednesday	Deadline for submission of draft resolutions on all items
Thursday/Friday (approx. 2 meetings)	Informal meetings on the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee

"Third phase b/

Fourth week	
Monday-Friday	Consideration of all draft resolutions
Fifth week	
Monday	Consideration of all draft resolutions
Tuesday-Friday	Action on all draft resolutions
Sixth week	
Monday-Friday (or as needed)	Action on all draft resolutions"

B. Draft decision A/C.1/48/L.59

5. At its 34th meeting, on 9 September 1994, the Chairman of the First Committee submitted a draft decision entitled "Organization of the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee)" (A/C.1/48/L.59).

6. At the same meeting, the First Committee adopted draft decision A/C.1/48/L.59 without a vote.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

The General Assembly, taking note of the consultations of the Chairman of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee) on the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and of the working paper contained in the annex to the present decision, which was prepared by the Chairman of the First Committee on the basis of those consultations, decides to consider further the question of the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, taking into account, inter alia, the working paper prepared by the Chairman of the First Committee, as well as any other pertinent submissions and views of delegations.

ANNEX

Organization of the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee)

Working paper presented by the Chairman

1. The effectiveness of the First Committee should be enhanced by adopting for the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly a programme of work that takes into account the thematic approach set out in paragraph 2 of resolution 48/87 of 16 December 1993.

2. The number of meetings during the regular session of the First Committee should be recommended by the members of the incoming Bureau of the First Committee after consultations with delegations and the Secretariat, taking into account:

(a) The requirements in terms of time and services for the First Committee to fulfil its duties;

(b) The number of meetings normally allocated to previous sessions;

(c) The degree to which the First Committee at previous sessions was able to fulfil its duties in the allocated meeting time;

(d) The degree to which the First Committee at previous sessions made full use of the allocated meeting time;

(e) Available means and resources.

3. The proceedings of the First Committee should follow a three-phased approach, the consecutive elements of which are characterized as follows:

(a) General debate (first phase):

(i) The time for the delivery of a single statement should not exceed seven minutes per delegation;

(ii) Statements on behalf of more than one delegation should not exceed twelve minutes;

(iii) More extensive and detailed contributions to the general debate may be tabled in written form and will be considered as if they were read out orally. They will be reflected in the records of the First Committee without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;

(iv) The floor should be given to the speakers on the basis of a consecutive list of speakers to the extent possible in order to complete the general debate at the earliest possible stage;

(b) Discussion of specific items under consideration in the First Committee (second phase):

(i) The meetings should be held in an informal mode but with appropriate conference services;

(ii) The discussion should be structured according to broad topic areas in line with paragraph 2 of resolution 48/87, taking into consideration the fact that meetings for discussion of different topics should not overlap;

(iii) Based on consultations and the outcome of the previous session of the First Committee, the Chairman of the First Committee, in cooperation with its Bureau and the Secretariat, should submit an indicative list of key questions to be addressed within each of the major topic areas;

(c) Consideration of and action on draft resolutions (third phase):

(i) The deadline for the submission of draft resolutions should only be after the end of the second phase;

(ii) The consideration of all draft resolutions should follow the same clustering in broad topic areas as was adopted for the second phase.

4. In implementing the three-phase approach outlined in paragraph 3 above, the adoption, for the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, of a programme of work of the First Committee and timetable along the lines of the illustrative example provided in the appendix to the present working paper should be considered.

5. The incoming Chairman of the First Committee should continue consultations on the further rationalization of the work and the effective functioning of the First Committee.

6. The Secretary-General should provide, taking due account of existing resource constraints, the appropriate means and resources to permit the implementation of the programme of work of the First Committee for the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

APPENDIX

Illustrative example of a programme of work and timetable

First phase

First week

Monday-Thursday (approx. 5 meetings a/)	General debate
Monday 6 p.m.	Closure of the list of speakers for the general debate

Second phase b/

Friday Second week Monday-Friday Third week Monday	Discussion of specific items in informal consultations (with appropriate conference services)
Wednesday	Deadline for submission of draft resolutions on all items

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a/ This figure may need adjustment after the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate.

b/ The overall number of meetings for the regular session of the Committee should be determined as described in paragraph 2 of the present working paper. This number should include:

One meeting for organizational questions

One meeting for the observance of Disarmament Week and the Pledging Conference for the Disarmament Information Programme

Approximately five meetings for the general debate

Approximately two meetings for rationalization and reform

The remainder of the meeting time available should be divided up between the second and third phases so that approximately two fifths should be allocated to the second phase and three fifths to the third phase.

Thursday/Friday (approx. 2 meetings)	Informal meetings on the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee

Third phase b/

Fourth week

Monday-Friday	Consideration of all draft resolutions

Fifth week

Monday	Consideration of all draft resolutions
Tuesday-Friday	Action on all draft resolutions

Sixth week

Monday-Friday (or as needed)	Action on all draft resolutions